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UNCLAS MADRID 000568

SIPDIS

DEPT OF AGRICULTURE FOR FAS/ITP
BRUSSELS FOR USFAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [SP](#) [USTR](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SPAIN'S MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE ELENA ESPINOSA

REF: A. STATE 019814

[B.](#) STATE 020469

SUMMARY

[¶1.](#) Robert Manzanares, Charge d'Affaires; Stephen Hammond, Agriculture Counselor, and Carl Schonander, Economic Officer, met on February 10 with Spain's Minister of Agriculture Elena Espinosa; Secretary General for Agriculture and Food, Fernando Moraleda, and Director General for Agriculture Angel Luis Alvarez to discuss State 020468 and 019814.

Rice Negotiations (Ref. A)

[¶2.](#) Spain's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) not only does not support the U.S. position for inclusion of a negotiated agreement on U.S. access to the European rice market into the head note, they do not support the current state of negotiations between U.S. and European Commission (EC) negotiators. Their position is simply that they will not support any reduction of the current bound tariff rates for rice.

[¶3.](#) That being said, MOA officials are very concerned about the implications of concession withdrawal. They ask why Spain had been so heavily targeted; noting that over 70 percent of concession withdrawal was targeted at them. They have calculated the potential negative impact on their exports and spoke specifically to the negative effect this would be on the clementine industry, just recovering its export market in the United States.

[¶4.](#) From the tone set when we broached the subject of rice, we believe that MOA officials will be working to protect their rice producers until the final moment a decision has to be taken by the U.S. and European negotiators.

Wood Packaging (Ref. B)

[¶5.](#) The Spanish Minister of Agriculture said that Spain would support the European Commission's suggested delayed implementation of directive 2004/102/EC for one year in the upcoming February 28, Agriculture Council meeting. Her second in command clarified that this would be a reversal of the position they had taken in the last phytosanitary meeting regarding wood packaging, but this reversal is only to allow the United States and other concerned countries time to adjust operations to the requirements in directive 2004/102/EC. He said that Spain did not agree with the U.S. assessment of the EC's wood packaging directive, but did agree that we needed the additional adjustment period.

MANZANARES